

# Millcreek High School 2410 East Riverside Drive St. George, Utah 84790

**April 8, 2008** 





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

## THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

## Millcreek High School 2410 East Riverside Drive St. George, UT 84790

**April 8, 2008** 

#### **UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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#### **FOREWORD**

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 8, 2008, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Millcreek High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Terry Ogborn is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Millcreek High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Millcreek High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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## MILLCREEK HIGH SCHOOL

## ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

## **Administration**

Terry G. OgbornPrincipal				
Counseling				
Heidi Tasso				
Support Staff				
Connie Brown Sharon Gillespie Joe Hartman Carma Hiatt Melanee Higgins Faye House	Tonya Jesienouski Kathy Laub Stephan Lemire Kara Lybert Brenda McArthur Michelle Mosteller	Henry Ogborn Jill Olsen Amber Raymer Silvia Roldan		
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Ta'ei Taula Aloi Allen Beagley Lanae Bladen Jill Bridges James Cluff Shelly Flake Kelli Hicks Becky Jackson	Karen Jennings Lynn Madsen Pam Molesworth Roberta Mosteller Karen Nielson Kathryn Parry Peggy Priggameier Annette Reitano	Linda Schimbeck Stacy Schimbeck Kathleen Wagner Jaelyn Wallace Jeffrey Wilkes Katherine Wood		
Kathy Laub Terry Ogborn Heidi Tasso	School Leadership Team			

#### MILLCREEK HIGH SCHOOL

## MISSION STATEMENT

Millcreek High School is a supportive learning community which values character, personal responsibility, rigorous and relevant educational opportunities.

## **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

Millcreek High School believes that . . .

- A quality education enables students to make positive life choices.
- High expectations foster greater achievements.
- Optimal learning takes place in a climate of caring, mutual respect and trust.
- All students can learn.
- All students have different learning styles.
- Attendance is a major factor in student success.
- Honesty, integrity and responsible behavior are important aspects for student achievement.
- All students have the right to a safe, orderly, disciplined school environment.
- Teaching essential skills for student employability are essential.
- Learning is a continuous lifelong process.

## **DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)**

## 1. A Life Long Learner

- Demonstrate development of learning-to-learn skills
- Demonstrate the ability to initiate their own learning and demonstrate persistence
- Demonstrate critical and creative thinking, problem solving and decisionmaking
- Make realistic and appropriate decisions using insight, humor and persistence
- Seek opportunities for further education and learning

## 2. A Responsible Citizen

- Demonstrate individual responsibility
- Understand and promote democratic principles of freedom, justice, pluralism and equality
- Participate in activities that promote the public good
- Practice a healthy lifestyle
- Demonstrate global responsibility and responsible stewardship of the earth

#### 3. An Effective Communicator

- Demonstrate competency in reading, writing, listening and math skills
- Acquire, Analyze, Integrate and Evaluate various forms of communication
- Communicate with clarity, purpose and understanding of audience
- Value and Develop strategies for improving communication
- Participate as a peaceful problem solver

## 4. An Employable Individual

- Demonstrate understanding of oneself, abilities, interests and strength that will lead to appropriate career choices
- Explore, Prepare and Choose a career path within a field of interests
- Demonstrate employability skills necessary to obtain and maintain employment
- Develop the personal characteristics necessary for successful employment
- Develop transferable skills that can be used in a variety of career fields

Date of Visit: April 8, 2008

## MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ted Lovato, Accreditation Specialist, Utah State Office of Education (USOE) and Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS), Visiting Team Chairperson

Dennis Heaton, Southwest Education Academy, Iron County School District

Don Link, Valley High School, Jordan School District

#### **VISITING TEAM REPORT**

## MILLCREEK HIGH SCHOOL

**CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE** 

Millcreek High School is the Alternative High School for the Washington County School District. The school is housed in a new, attractive, and well-designed school building in St. George, Utah. The school was completed in July of 2001 and is well kept; it feels as if the doors opened for the first time this year. The building has several classrooms; a multipurpose room; a library and multimedia center; writing, science, and business computer labs; an art studio/classroom; a family and consumer science room; and a day care facility. A separate portion of the school houses the Focus Center, which is used for directed studies and expelled students.

Students are referred to Millcreek from the other six high schools in the Washington County School District. Millcreek High School serves 284 students, grades 9-12, 136 females and 148 males. The percentage of Millcreek students considered low-income is currently at 30.6 percent. Thirty-nine (39) students are classified as special education, while 26 students are listed as English language learners. Sixteen (16) students are classified as homeless, 58 students are on court-ordered probation, and eight are in the Youth in Custody program. The members of the graduating class of 2007 numbered 57; 15 other seniors were graduated through the Super Senior Program.

The students, considered at-risk, represent a wide diversity and many backgrounds with differing social, cultural, emotional and educational challenges. Through outstanding leadership and the elevated dedication of highly qualified and caring teachers and staff, Millcreek High students feel they belong, are respected and feel they can succeed.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The Visiting Team realized before the actual on-site visit that the Millcreek faculty and staff knew about the type of students they were educating. The indepth and well researched self-study and profile revealed an abundance of valid and reliable data concerning the Millcreek students. The knowledge the school has regarding the students it serves is a significant finding.

Because of this depth of knowledge, members of the school staff are aware of the many needs of the at-risk student population they serve. Valuable and practicable programs have been designed and implemented to help the Millcreek High School student succeed.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The Visiting Team felt the self-study was very substantial, containing copious amounts of information. The self-study totaled 587 pages, and at times was somewhat cumbersome to navigate; however, the amount of work that went into producing the document must be applauded, since the school community will benefit greatly from the amount of research and analysis that the profile reveals.

c) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The Visiting Team felt the school staff did an outstanding job of producing the extensive and comprehensive self-study document, which produced a wealth of reliable and valid information and data. The document stated that Millcreek offers several differences, as compared to the other six district high schools, to students hoping to make a positive change in their educational attitude and success. Teacher advocates, smaller class sizes, flexibility in scheduling, a four-day week (Monday through Thursday), extended hours (7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.), and multiple methods of credit recovery are just a few of those differences.

The mission, belief statements and DRSLs reflect the accuracy of the self-study.

Teachers wrote, "... recognizing the differences and challenges of Millcreek High School students was of crucial importance. Just because a student has challenges in their life does not mean they cannot learn and does not mean they cannot behave appropriately." The Visiting Team witnessed this outstanding school acting on its beliefs, carrying out its mission, and achieving its desired results for student learning.

## **Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

The Visiting Team recommends that longitudinal measurements and studies be completed on as many as the Millcreek graduates as is feasible in order to account for comprehend the scope of their work with these students.

## CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

## Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs):

a) To what degree were the school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs developed and/or revised collaboratively by the school community to define a compelling purpose and vision for the school and to support student achievement?

The Visiting Team commends the school for the collaborative process used to develop and refine the shared vision and philosophy that provides purpose and direction to Millcreek High School. The school has included its stakeholders—administrators, community members, staff, parents and students—in reviewing and revising its beliefs, DRSLs and goals. Among those spoken to by the Visiting Team, there was a clear sense of investment in and ownership of the school. As always in an alternative setting, student, parent and community involvement is both critical and difficult to obtain. Millcreek High School has made a substantially effort to include these crucial parties. The school's documentation also details the thinking that went into the revisions made to the mission and belief statements as part of preparation for the accreditation visit.

b) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's DRSLs?

The school's mission and beliefs clearly align with its DRSLs. The staff and students are familiar with these statements, and a systematic effort has been made to connect the mission and beliefs of the school to classroom practice through the DRSLs. Each teacher has diagramed the way the DRSLs will connect to each specific content area in a school-generated document kept in the classroom called the Accreditation Resource Handbook. This reflects the effort the school has made to create action in the classroom from its mission and belief statements.

c) Describe the indicators (measures) that have been developed to assess the school's progress in assessing the DRSLs.

From each of its DRSLs, the school has created a set of measurable, actionable objectives. In order to ascertain progress, the school has formed a detailed rubric for each objective that uses three distinct categories for the result: Exceeding, Meeting and Approaching. This system of rating is evident throughout the school and is used by classroom teachers for the evaluation of individual student progress.

d) To what extent do the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school, and appear evident in the culture of the school?

The Visiting Team was able to verify, through interviews with the students and staff, that the school has a high degree of awareness and investment in its mission, beliefs and DRSLs. It was noteworthy that the teachers had documented in their individual Accreditation Resource Handbooks how the DRSLs would be met in their specific curriculum areas. The practices and policies of the school also aligned substantially with school's mission, beliefs and DRSLs. This is evident from the program to remediate students needing help with the UBSCT, from the warm and inviting physical environment, and from the school's high expectations for student behavior and personal pride.

## **Curriculum:**

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards, the Utah Core Curriculum, reflecting the Utah Life Skills: A Guide to Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Success?

As described in the accreditation document, Millcreek participated in a district-wide effort to develop Power Standards intended to be in line with the State Core Curriculum. In response, Millcreek devised a form that is used by all teachers to develop Power Standards for each of the subjects they teach. The school used a collaborative process for meeting and writing standards that are correlated to the Core Curriculum, Code of Ethics, and Life Skills. The Power Standards break the Core Curriculum into units, lessons and tasks. In this way, units of instruction are always tied to Power Standards and, thus, reflect the Core Curriculum as well as the Life Skills and Character Education programs.

b) To what extent does the curriculum engage **all** students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills?

As an alternative school, Millcreek has a student population that generally has not met with success at traditional schools. The goal of the school is to give students the opportunity to learn with the same rigor and relevance that they would experience at a traditional school, using less traditional teaching methods. Small classes and a more personal approach to teaching allow students at Millcreek access to knowledge that would not be possible at a larger, comprehensive high school. Teachers adhere to the Utah State Core Curriculum via the Power Standards that guide their instruction. To the extent that the State Core requires inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills, Millcreek students are engaged in these skills due to the close tie teachers maintain to core standards.

c) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's DRSLs?

As mentioned in question *a*) above, Millcreek utilizes a system for developing Power Standards tied directly to the DRSLs. Each teacher uses a template that contains the school's mission statement, code of ethics, and one of the four DRSLs. Teachers extract standards from the Core Curriculum that align with each DRSL, and write these on the template. Two standards are also tied to the Code of Ethics or Life Skills. Teachers then can use these Power Standards as the basis for units and lessons. This whole process is done collaboratively. Each teacher maintains a notebook containing the finished templates and unit organizing materials. This process creates a direct link between what is taught and the standards in the core.

d) How does the staff use assessments to drive curriculum to ensure that **all** students can reach the intended learning outcomes?

Once the Power Standards are established for a class, teachers use benchmark assessments developed school-wide as a measure to monitor students' progress toward the standards. If students have not mastered a Power Standard, material is re-taught so that all students have the opportunity to master the Core Curriculum.

## **Instruction:**

*To what extent do teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning?* 

There is evidence that Millcreek teachers use a variety of instructional strategies, and that these strategies are adjusted to the needs of individual students through ongoing assessment and adherence to Power Standards. The faculty reviews assessment data collaboratively and based instructional modifications on this information. The limited number of teachers in each department makes it difficult to offer option for students instructionally, but each teacher seems to try to adapt his/her instruction to the needs and learning styles of their students.

b) To what extent have the school and the staff developed strategies for instruction that build the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom?

Instruction in each classroom appears to be guided by DRSLs and corresponding Power Standards, as evidenced by the notebook maintained by each teacher in his/her classroom. Power Standards become the basis for lesson planning and instructional decision making.

c) To what extent is the school's professional development program guided by identified instructional needs, and how does it provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies that support student learning?

Millcreek High appears to be committed to the idea of continuous improvement through professional development. The school uses a Professional Learning Communities grant to support collaboration among the faculty, and allowed several teachers to attend the "Solution Tree: Learning by Doing PLC 2008 Summit." The school plans on sharing this training the rest of the staff. The administration also supports informal "learning walks" to give teachers a chance to see teaching strategies being used by others on the faculty. There is also time devoted to professional collaboration, attending conferences and workshops, and "sharing successes" during faculty meetings.

d) To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?

All classroom teachers are adequately prepared in the subjects they teach. As stated in *c*) above, the faculty at Millcreek appears to have ample opportunity for collaboration regarding both research-based trends in education and instructional strategies used by colleagues in the school, an aspect of professional development that is often neglected. It sounds as though the Washington School District has been supportive of research-based initiatives and has included Millcreek High School in professional development activities that all district schools participate in. The development of Power Standards and benchmark assessments requires teachers to reflect and assess their own performance relative to student success.

e) To what extent does the school effectively implement a well-defined plan for the integration of technology into its curriculum, instruction, and assessments?

Some departments report significant integration of technology into classroom routines; others report far less technology use. All teachers appear to have access to a wide variety of technology tools including scanners, LCD projectors, Elmos, student response systems, and Interwrite Boards. While there was an emphasis on promoting technology use in the CSIP, it did not seem to be a strong priority in the departments' analyses. Students have access to computers through three computer labs, the media center, and additional terminals in several classrooms. Students are allowed to use computers during the lunch break or after school as needed.

## **Assessment:**

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments with performance standards based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The self-study document, in the focus group section, outlined staff efforts in researching quality assessment systems and stated that "identifying what matters most for students to know, along with what they need to understand, is key. Benchmark assessments aren't confined to multiple-choice testing formats, but utilize a variety of methods to observe evidence of student learning."

The development and implementation of appropriate student assessments has taken precedence, and teachers have received in-service and have collaborated to learn about and then implement benchmark assessments with students that are centered on their Power Standards.

b) To what extent does the school have a process to fairly and equitably assess school-wide and individual progress in achieving academic expectations?

The use of benchmark assessments is key to the teachers of Millcreek. They can observe and identify which areas of learning require feedback, further instruction, or reinforcement for individual students, along with accentuating student positives during a unit of study; thus, teachers are using assessments for learning. The focus group writes, "Learning is based on clearly stated objectives, and expectations. As teachers provide learning opportunities, students are given examples of what constitutes "approaching," "meeting," or "exceeding" expectations in relation to their quality of work or performance and the learning targets they are responsible to master. Grading rubrics are identified and provided to students at the beginning of each learning unit."

c) To what extent does the professional staff use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its academic expectations?

There is much evidence that the teachers and administrators place a high value on valuable data provided by various state assessments. CRT and UBSCT tests provide critical information, although the late arrival of CRT data from the state hinders teachers from using the data directly with the individual student since the student has moved on. Teachers write, "CRT results are more of an autopsy for teachers to identify areas of lower student performance on specific standards and objectives in reference to classroom instruction." Teachers use the data to adjust instruction and teaching strategies as needed.

d) To what extent does the school's professional development program allow for opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies?

As stated earlier, the development and implementation of appropriate assessments was a priority this past year for the Millcreek High School staff. At the time of the self-study completion, teachers wrote, "at this point, we feel our student assessments adequately cover the essential knowledge and skills identified in our power standards, but there is definitely room for improvement."

Teachers interviewed felt that additional in-service training would be very useful in analyzing all testing results. In addition, teachers request additional training in creating benchmark assessments through-out the curriculum.

Increasing student achievement, with the use of results of assessment analysis to alter and adapt instruction, is a strong desire for most teachers, and most feel that more professional development would help them.

e) To what extent is there organizational agreement on the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess the identified DRSL?

The Millcreek High School administration and staff are united in a strong desire to improve student achievement, and believe the DRSLs are very well suited to the at-risk population the school serves. During the spring of 2007, the Washington County School District requested that each school in the district "work and develop their own power standards that were in line with the state core curriculum." The Millcreek administration and faculty desired to include the school's DRSLs, Code of Ethics, and Life Skills "which would incorporate character education as well as each area academic core curriculum." By working collaboratively, the staff members were involved in a process that was four-fold; incorporating the Utah State Office of Education's Core Curriculum, identified DRSLs, Code of Ethics, and Life Skills. Two standards from each DRSL were tied to the Code of Ethics or Life Skills, and the remaining standards were tied to the State Core. Teachers were then able to more fully visualize how their teaching in each specific subject area was relevant to students' learning and to Millcreek High School's mission statement and purpose.

The Visiting Team was impressed by the form that was designed and implemented by the staff. It is a powerful tool, unique and specific, for use by the Millcreek teachers.

## **CHAPTER 3: NAAS SUPPORT STANDARDS**

## **Leadership and Organization:**

- a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate that actively supports teaching and learning?
  - The administrator at Millcreek High School is highly regarded by the students, community members and staff. These parties feel valued, and feel that the administrator goes to great lengths to provide them with resources and ensure their success in the school. The administrator clearly provides support to the staff and the students who, in turn, recognized her commitment to them and the school. She is an excellent role model.
- b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative to monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness?
  - For the most part, the school's decision-making process is collaborative and focuses on good teaching and student progress. As part of the long-range plan and goals for professional development, the school staff intends to find tools and training that will allow for better real-time data collection and analysis that will improve the schools ability to make data-driven decisions about instruction.
- c) To what extent does the leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and allocation and use of resources at the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment which aligns with the school goals, DRSLs, and school improvement?
  - The staff and students repeatedly commented that the school leadership constantly works to ensure that the school has sufficient resources to effectively fulfill its mission. The school organization is well-run, and has the reputation throughout its district as a "great" place to work. The administrator has worked with stakeholders to create a detailed emergency plan and a safe, secure learning environment.
- d) To what extent does the school leadership empower the entire school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning through meaningful roles in the decision-making process?
  - The administrator has worked to include students, parents, community members, and staff members in creating/revising the school mission and goals. The students are allowed a number of options, from directed studies to night school, to help

them take charge of their own learning. When staff members have suggestions or new ideas, they are allowed and encouraged to explore them to see if there are better ways to serve students. There seems to be a high level of trust between the principal and staff, and between the staff and students.

e) To what extent has the school established a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning?

Millcreek High School has a remarkable system for tracking students and ensuring that they have daily contact with a staff member who encourages and tracks them. This is called the Teacher Advocate (TA) program. Each student is assigned to a first-period TA class. The teacher supports the student through grade and attendance check, advocacy with other teachers, phone calls home, and SEOPs.

#### **School Services:**

This standard is dealt with in the school's NAAS Annual Report, which requires specific responses and information regarding student support services, guidance services, health services, library information services, special education services, and family and community services.

## **Facilities and Finances:**

This standard is addressed in the school's annual report to NAAS, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

### CHAPTER 4: NAAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

### **Culture of Continual Improvement:**

a) To what extent has the school developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using Collaborating for Student Achievement, the Utah accreditation/school improvement process that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis?

The school has a comprehensive school improvement plan that aligns with the local school district's plan as well as the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The plan is revisited annually to assess progress and to determine whether any revisions or additions are necessary,

b) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through an aligned and ongoing professional development plan focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The school does a good job of supporting teachers and providing many professional development opportunities that are in line with the school improvement plan. One area where the school has determined a need for future professional development is that of data collection and analysis and data-driven decision making. This is addressed in the school plan. In addition, teachers desire more professional development, with assessment strategies including the creation of benchmark assessments and the analysis of state testing data.

c) To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

The school action plan is detailed and addresses the school's needs. There appears to be complete school-wide commitment to the school's plan. The staff is clear on time frames and areas of responsibility for enacting individual areas of school improvement plan.

*d)* To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The school fosters a positive environment that is rewarding for both the students and the staff. During the visit there were many comments from the staff expressing how much they enjoyed being a part of this school and how empowered they felt. All involved seem to be focused on helping students be successful. Everyone felt that his/her input and contributions were honored and respected. It was apparent to the Visiting Team that a high level of trust exists at Millcreek High School.

e) What significant progress has been made in implementing the original action plan since the last full visit?

The school-wide action plan from six years ago (pages 77-79 of the accreditation document) has largely been completed or supplanted by the current plan. The current plan is more focused, detailed, and sophisticated. The important and relevant elements of the previous plan have been fulfilled.

f) What significant progress has the school made in addressing the **major** recommendations of the previous Visiting Team and/or review team?

The recommendation to improve data gathering and analysis for decision making is still in progress. The school is aware of this and is making a substantive effort in this area.

The recommendation to refine the school action plan has been addressed. The new plan has an appropriate scope and is specific in addressing what will be done, when the actions will be complete or evaluated, and who is responsible for each objective.

The recommendation to better incorporate the DRSLs into all content areas and school procedures has been met. Each teacher has analyzed how the DRSLs will be implemented in the content area, and this analysis is documented in the teacher's Accreditation Resource Handbook.

### **CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING**

*To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships* within *the school?* 

The Visiting Team observed that community building at Millcreek High is critical if the students are to succeed. Alternative education students, on the whole, did not have a sense of belonging at their traditional home school. The mission of Millcreek High School promotes "a supportive learning community," and the administration and staff believe they have created a climate where students feel respected and wanted, and where a strong sense of self-esteem will evolve. With success in the classroom and the development of vocational skills, students can feel they belong to a school that truly supports them.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The self-study document revealed that "the relationships within the school are strengthened and nurtured through a variety of productive ways." Student success is celebrated. Positive behavior is rewarded with meaningful incentives, and school activities are designed to foster unity and to treat everyone as an equal. The school not only promotes and "fosters positive and productive relationships" within the school, but also extends their relationship within the community through cooperative networks of support for greater learning.

c) To what extent has the school engaged the school community in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

Millcreek has extensively engaged the school community on behalf of students. Strong efforts are made to involve parents, even though parents of at-risk students do not get involved in large numbers, which is a challenge for the school. Parents are required to attend the New Student Orientation, and encouraged to come to the

SEOP conferences (twice a year) and become involved with Millcreek's open-door policy. The school maintains a Community Council; is proud of its academic links with Dixie College, Dixie ATC, and local businesses; and is involved with the GRASP program funded by a federal grant. The Visiting Team was made aware of many other community-building efforts, and was impressed with the overall efforts made on behalf of students.

d) How are results of school improvement identified, documented, used, and communicated to **all** stakeholders?

The Millcreek High School staff is proud of their students' achievements and submit weekly articles to the city newspaper, *The Spectrum*, which highlights the students in the "Inside our Schools" section. The Career Assembly brings local businesspeople to the school to share successes, information, and experiences. Feeder high schools are invited to come to the school and share in the excitement of student success. Collaborative networks exist with the Elks Club, American Association of University Women, Sons of Utah Pioneers, Team RAW, etc. In addition, Educational Talent Search (ETS) maintains a strong partnership and even has office space afforded to it.

## CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

## **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends the Washington County Board of Education and the district administration for the continued support extended to Millcreek High School, which allows the school to offer several quality and varied options to accommodate the needs of at-risk students.
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty and staff of Millcreek High School for creating a school culture that accepts and values each student and offers him/her a focused, high-quality educational experience.
- The Visiting Team commends the Millcreek High School faculty and staff for the extensive and thoroughly researched self-study, which not only validates the excellent instructional program but also provides a blueprint for future growth.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration of Millcreek High School for exemplary leadership that provides a strong foundation of support for students, a high degree of trust, and opportunities for teacher professional development.

- The Visiting Team commends Millcreek High for an impressive array of educational opportunities, including directed studies, night school, the Young Parent Program, and the Focus Center. These varied programs acknowledge the diverse needs of the local high school population. Also noteworthy are the monthly awards assembly and the monetary incentives offered for outstanding performance.
- The Visiting Team commends Millcreek High School for the successful implementation of the Teacher Advocate Program. This program allows teachers to invest themselves in the personal growth of individual students and teach valuable skills that are beyond the typical academic curriculum.
- The Visiting Team commends Millcreek High for maintaining an attractive and efficient media center that provides great support for students and teachers alike.
- The Visiting Team commends the teachers at Millcreek High School for incorporating a philosophy of nonconformity and maintaining student learning and personal growth as the centerpiece of their instruction.
- The Visiting Team believes that the Millcreek High School facility is an asset toward serving the school's mission, and commends the staff for its cleanliness, upkeep, and utilization of resources.
- The Visiting Team recognizes that the faculty and staff utilize technology effectively and appropriately in the classroom.

## **Recommendations:**

- Based on student input, the Visiting Team recommends that, as resources allow, Millcreek High School course offerings be expanded to include higher levels of math, more history, and some foreign language courses.
- The Visiting Team recommends that future professional development include training in developing common assessments, analyzing student data, and collaborating to use assessment data to drive instructional practices.
- The Visiting Team recommends that literacy become a focal point of overall school improvement planning, including the possibility of greater emphasis on reading instruction.